

DELAWARE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
DOCKET 06-241
PUBLIC COMMENT 01
Wednesday, August 16, 2006

Dear Ms. Nickerson:

The long-term power proposal comes down to some serious choices. The choices are not only between increased public health costs and a cleaner environment, but may well be between a Delaware, as we know it and the loss of the land mass to rising seas.

There has been considerable talk of reduced pollution through add on controls at existing plants and the building of a new IGCC plant. No matter how efficient the controls, a new coal fired facility will add more SO₂, NO_x, and mercury to the environment. As best I can estimate, a 630 MW unit with 90% SO₂, 80% NO_x, and 90% mercury capture would still add 1,770 tons SO₂, 1,200 tons NO_x, and 16 to 19 pounds of mercury. The public health cost of SO₂ emissions are now well quantified and at \$7000 per ton a new facility would inflict \$12,400,000 annually in medical and other costs. Recent studies have shown that for every **1000 pounds** of mercury emitted there is a 43% increase in the incidence of special education needs and a 63% increase in autism in the local school districts. For the Indian River and Cape Henlopen Districts alone, this translates into about a 100 more cases at 19 pounds of new mercury emissions. The education cost difference alone for 100 students would be another \$7,100,000. Thus, annual costs to the taxpayer for a new coal fired facility would far exceed \$19,500,000 annually.

While many still debate the effects of global warming, now unfortunately is when decisions that shape the future have to be made. With the building of new coal power plants with scrubbers, which do not separate out the CO₂, we are saying that we are willing to give up Delaware, including all of our beaches and coastal wetlands, to the sea (CO₂-> less polar ice-> melt Greenland-> 21 feet sea level rise in DE). There are methods for separating and sequestering the CO₂ from coal, but they are not available yet and may not work in Delaware due to it's geology--that would need to be studied. What advantage is gained from new coal plants without CO₂ capture that would be worth the horrifying cost to Delaware, especially since Delaware has alternatives?

Delaware has a huge offshore wind resource (many 1,000s of MW), enough to power the entire state many times over--see the analysis by Dhanju et al at www.ocean.udel.edu/windpower. NY and NJ are planning large offshore wind facilities, encouraged by those state governments, why not Delaware?

For me the choice would be clear. It seems far better to seek renewable power, than repeat the mistakes of the past.

Sincerely,